



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

October 21, 2021

Fiscal Committee of the General Court
The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chair
State House
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Representative Umberger and Members of the Committee:

Last week, the Executive Council voted to reject \$27 Million in federal public health funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) out of concerns that limited boilerplate language somehow waived the State's ability to continue to fight COVID-19 in a way that is best for Granite Staters as determined by the State. To the contrary, the rejection of these funds will actually limit the State's ability to continue to control how vaccines are provided in our State.

For example, by limiting the State's ability to invest in its vaccine data system means the State will not have the capacity to collect aggregated data on the State's vaccination rate, or who has received a booster vaccine. That means that the State will be limited to relying on federal CDC data instead of its own.

Further, absent robust New Hampshire data, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will be limited in its understanding of vaccine breakthrough cases. Healthcare providers will have incomplete information to make medical decisions with their patients. The public will not have easy access to their medical records. Policy makers and DHHS will have to further depend on federal CDC data and will be unable to verify information with our own New Hampshire data.

Not only will the State have to look to federal data sources in order to continue its evidence-based approach to pandemic response, this action is cutting off resources for providing vaccines across the State. New Hampshire planned to use funds to support vaccine clinics and to support the operational logistics of supplying vaccine – basic items such as dry ice, shipping containers, postage, and the ability for staff to do required monitoring of clinics.

As of November 2021, it is anticipated that the approximately 125,000 New Hampshire children age 5-11 will become eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine. In addition, as more vaccines are approved for booster doses, providers could be faced with hundreds of thousands of New Hampshire residents seeking vaccines, with little or no support.

In an effort to address some of these challenges, DHHS has submitted a late item to the Fiscal Committee to approve \$4.7 million in ARP State Recovery funds to support COVID-19 vaccine delivery within Federally Qualified Health Centers and voluntary school based clinics. This funding is critical to ensure boosters are available to the State's vulnerable and at risk populations. Cases of COVID-19 are

increasing among children and many parents are interested in vaccinating their children to help prevent illness and transmission of disease.

These funds will support Regional Public Health Networks (RHPNs) to set up efficient vaccine clinics throughout the state to improve access for individuals and caregivers who wish to have their children vaccinated. FQHCs and RHPNs provide familiar and convenient locations for working families to get themselves and their children vaccinated. School-based and community clinics relieve the burden on an already stressed health care system.

This unfortunately means the State is left only with the option to use more flexible funding, while sending back New Hampshire's allocation from the CDC.

As we face the task of providing primary doses for children and booster shots over the next twelve months, DHHS will have addition critical needs beyond this request for \$4.7 million, to support the healthcare community. Vaccine must be shipped, hospitals and healthcare practices unaffiliated with hospital systems need support for vaccine delivery, DHHS staff need to visit each vaccine provider for federally required inspections, and DPHS has continued needs for temporary staff and overtime. Those costs exceed \$7.165 million over the next 12 months:

Infectious Disease Prevention Services at Manchester and Nashua Health Departments	\$120,000
Hospital Funding for Vaccine Delivery	\$2,600,000
Unaffiliated Health Care Providers	\$3,700,000
Shipping supplies	\$250,000
Postage	\$25,000
In state travel for required site visits	\$5,500
Temp Surge Staffing	\$325,000
Overtime	\$140,000
Total	\$7,165,500

Without these funds, state run vaccine operations will come to a halt, leaving Granite Staters to rely on federal vaccination efforts. As a first step, we urge you to approve the requested authorization by the Department of Health and Humans Services tomorrow. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor



Lori Shibillette
Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services